



October 17, 2005

**Dear RIPAE Member:**

The new Medicare Prescription Drug Program begins on January 1, 2006. For most Medicare beneficiaries, joining a Medicare Prescription Drug Plan will offer a unique opportunity to lower their prescription drug costs. The Rhode Island Department of Elderly Affairs (RIDEA) will be making every effort to help you make these important choices about paying for your medications.

RIDEA is conducting a re-certification of all current Rhode Island Pharmaceutical Assistance to the Elderly (RIPAE) members.

**You must re-apply for enrollment in RIPAE by January 15, 2006.**

Your current RIPAE card will no longer be accepted by pharmacies starting March 1, 2006.

**To ensure a smooth transition, you will need to take these steps:**

- Apply for "extra help" from the Social Security Administration (SSA). This application is enclosed for your convenience. If you have questions or need assistance, contact your local SSA office. (Listing is enclosed.)
- If you are notified by SSA that you are eligible for "extra help," you will need to join a Medicare Prescription Drug Plan to get help in paying for your medications.
- To continue receiving RIPAE assistance, you will be required to fill out a new RIPAE application. This application is enclosed for your convenience. Please bring your application and documents supporting your income to an agency nearest to you. (Listing is enclosed.)
- Once you are re-certified for RIPAE, you will receive a new membership card.

RIDEA strongly encourages all RIPAE members to join a Medicare Prescription Drug Plan during the initial enrollment period (**November 15, 2005 through May 15, 2006**) to avoid paying a higher premium at a later date.

RIDEA will help all current RIPAE members with their prescription drug plan decisions and guide them through the application and enrollment processes.

For more information, please contact RIDEA at 401-462-4000 (Voice) or 401-462-0740 (TTY).

Sincerely,



Corinne Calise Russo  
Director, Rhode Island Department of Elderly Affairs



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